

Good morning Mr. Chairman and members of the committee.

My name is Shane Schaff and I started my law enforcement career in 1996 with the Wheatland County Sheriff's Department. I currently work with the Billings Police Department and have since 2000. I have had the privilege to work in both a small and large community. While working in these two separate communities has given me an exceptional view on the aspect of my job, I have learned that the one thing that does not change in any law enforcement job is the constant state of change, to include the unexpected actions of those we deal with.

As part of my job I deal with those people in our society who do not conform to the laws of this State. I deal with these people because the public as a whole, does not or can not handle these people. These people who are breaking the law are dealt with by trained professionals, who have undergone hours of training at great expense to the communities they serve and protect. Law enforcement officers have the advantage of our training and special tools to deal with criminals. What we do not have, and those we deal with do have is, a wanton disregard for the safety of the community as a whole. These individuals who flee from the law, fight police officers and cause destruction and injury to others are some of the core reasons that Workman's Compensation are so important to my profession.

On May 5<sup>th</sup> 2009 I responded to a call of an individual who had run his car off the rim rocks that overlook Billings in an attempt to kill himself. This young man survived the crash, and ran from the scene of the accident. I located this young man in the irrigation canal at the base of the rims, in chest high water who repeatedly asked me to kill him. As he walked along in the chest high water I attempted to talk the young man out of the canal. After attempts to talk him out of the canal failed I realized that I was going to have to get into the canal and physically restrain him and take him into custody. As I attempted to take him into custody the individual had a rock hidden under the murky water which he repeatedly struck me with in the back of my head, neck and shoulder areas while he tried to hold me under the water. Other officers arrived and the individual was taken into custody.

I was transported to the hospital. I had several lacerations, a concussion, my right eye retina was torn and I had teeth which were cracked, among other injuries. I returned to work continuing to battle migraines and muscle spasms for almost a year. Through further doctor visits I learned that I had sustained spinal injury. I had to have a fusion of my spine at the base of my neck and an artificial vertebrae at level just above. I had surgery, which was covered by Workman's Comp, and returned to work. I continued to battle migraines and back problems. A recent CT scan shows that my fusion was not successful. I am scheduled for another surgery on March 31, next week, to redo my fusion portion of the surgery.

It has been almost 2 years since I have been injured and I am starting this repair and healing process all over again. As many of you know injuries which involve the spine can often require many years of follow-up and treatments. I am concerned that with an injury of this nature I will be under constant care for the rest of my life. I go out and do my job, protecting and serving my community, and I expect that those who I work for will do the same for me. I am unsure what my future holds as I wait for my next surgery. I don't want to have to worry that my coverage for the injuries I sustained will never be covered. I don't feel that it is fair that I should bear the burden of the cost of continued care due to an injury sustained while doing my job.

In law enforcement, our job is fluid. There is no safe way to have a pursuit, or chase a hardened criminal who is determined not to go to jail. While our training minimizes the risks we take, there are still risks we must take to protect our community. We do our jobs, because we are a special kind of people. We only ask that you continue to insure that we are taken care of. It is the right thing to do.

I appreciate your time and listening to me. With respect, Shane Schaff